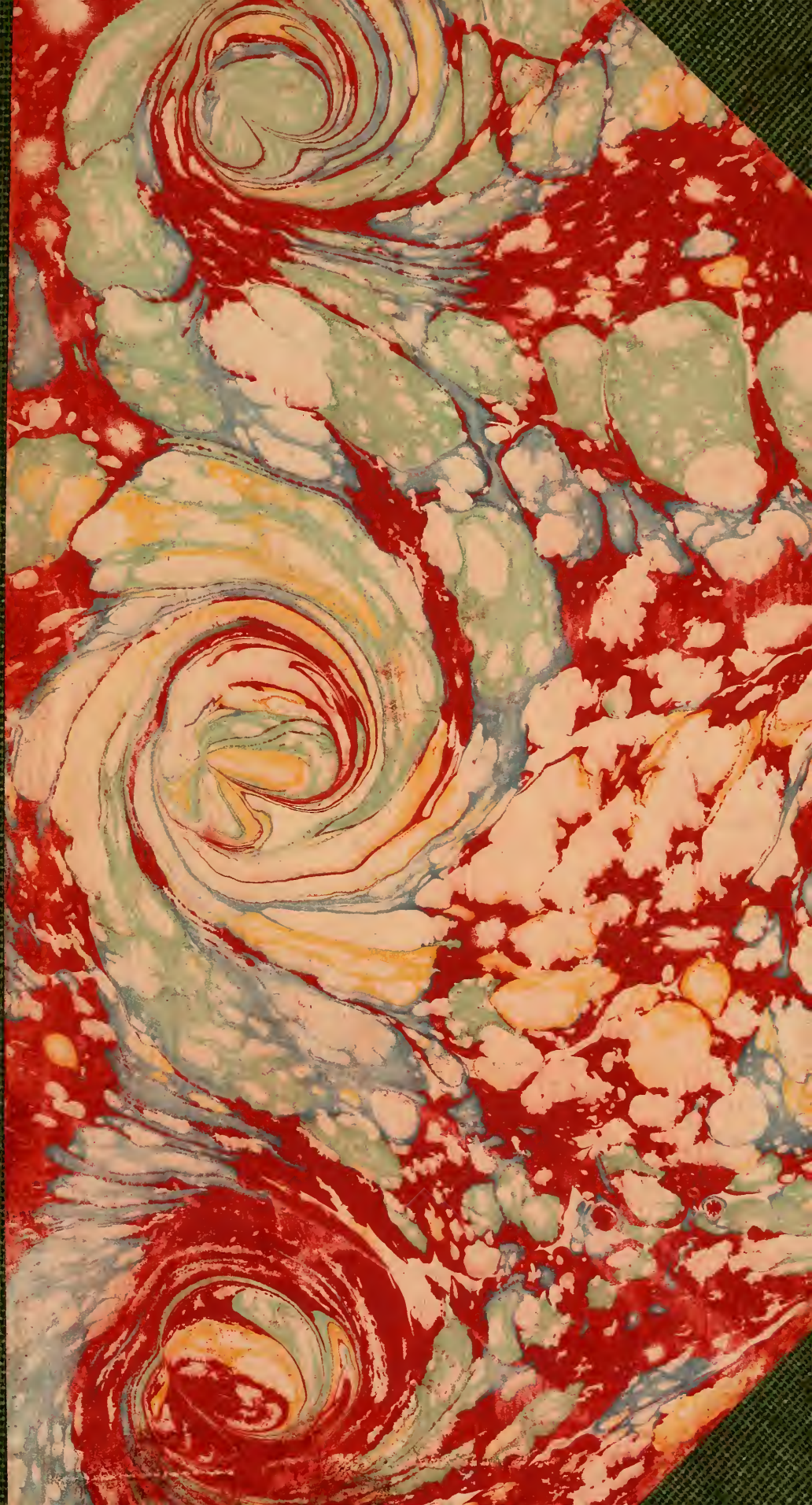


Boston Medical Library
in the Francis A. Countway
Library of Medicine ~ *Boston*

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Open Knowledge Commons and Harvard Medical School

http://www.archive.org/details/whatishomoeopath00holc

WHAT IS HOMŒOPATHY?

A NEW

Exposition of a Great Truth.

"*Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*"—ST. PAUL.

BY WILLIAM H. HOLCOMBE, M.D.,

AUTHOR OF THE "SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF HOMŒOPATHY," "YELLOW FEVER AND ITS HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT," ETC., ETC.

CHICAGO:

HOMŒOPATAIC PHARMACY, 147 CLARK STREET.

C. S. HALSEY.

1866.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866,

BY C. S. HALSEY,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

PREFACE.

SCENE—*In the Street of a City.* PERSONS—*Two Physicians meeting.*

Homœopathist.—Now, Doctor, we are old friends and schoolmates. We were educated at the same institutions, literary and scientific. Our opinions differ considerably on some important matters; but I believe we entertain a mutual respect for each other's motives and feelings. Excuse me, if I urge upon you, for the sake of truth, science and humanity, to consider and investigate Homœopathy in a serious and candid spirit.

Allopathist.—Why, my dear fellow! I investigated it long ago. I am a thoroughly practical man, Sir! a man of facts—without prejudices, without antipathies—a disciple of the Baconian philosophy, open to conviction and unbiased in my researches.

Homœopathist.—Just the material, my dear Doctor, for a splendid Homœopathist! What conclusion did your liberal investigation lead you to? May I ask you, *What is Homœopathy?*

Allopathist.—The art of practicing medicine with infinitesimal doses.

Homœopathist.—Not a bit of it!

Allopathist.—O, yes! You put a grain of Aconite into the Mississippi river at St. Paul, and give a teaspoonful of the same river water at New Orleans in cases of fever.

Homœopathist.—Pooh! The dose is no essential part of Homœopathy.

Allopathist.—Well, then, Homœopathy is the art of treating disease on the principle that "Like cures like." The hair of the dog that bit, is good for the bite, you know. But Mother Goose's Melodies illustrates your doctrine admirably. That invaluable book tells of a gentleman who scratched out both his eyes by jumping into a bramble bush, and forthwith scratched them in again by jumping into another! You give Arsenic when a man has been poisoned by Arsenic, etc.

Homœopathist.—Your wit is better than your knowledge, but they are both dated about forty years back. Can't you give me a more scientific definition of Homœopathy?

Allopathist.—Homœopathy is the art of prescribing for symptoms. Symptomatology run mad. It ignores Pathology, rejects the accumulated experience of ages, and is the grave of scientific medicine.

Homœopathist.—No, Sir! a tissue of misapprehensions, long since exploded.

Allopathist.—It is a strict system of diet—no medicine at all—"the art of amusing the patient, whilst nature cures the disease."

Homœopathist.—You are greatly mistaken, Sir!

Allopathist.—It never permits a purgative, an emetic, a blister.

Homœopathist.—Quite wrong, Sir!

Allopathist.—Then, Sir, it is the most potent Allopathy concealed under the form of sugar pellets and lucid tinctures.

Homœopathist.—Not at all, Sir!

Allopathist.—What is not deception and trickery, is downright transcendental medical moonshine.

Homœopathist.—No, Sir! No, Sir!

Allopathist.—It is humbug, Sir! humbug!! humbug!!!

Homœopathist.—No, Sir! no, Sir!! no, Sir!!!

Allopathist.—Then pray tell me, Sir, *what* is Homœopathy?

Homœopathist.—You have yourself defined admirably what Homœopathy is *not;* if you really wish to know what it *is*,

READ THIS LITTLE PAMPHLET!

HOMŒOPATHY: WHAT IS IT?

Who has not heard of Homœopathy? From the German centre in which it originated, this strange medical doctrine, with its stranger practice, has diffused itself, in sixty years, throughout the civilized world. In the United States alone, it has between two and three thousand educated practitioners. It is a vast and growing power in the scientific sphere of thought, demanding earnestly the attention of every intelligent man. Its real merit may be partially measured by the strength of the obstacles it has overcome. In the beginning every thing was against it. The doctors ridiculed it; the people distrusted it. It was assailed alike by professional jokes and by doggerel poetry. The novelty of its principle, the smallness of its dose, the extravagance of its claims, the dogmatism of its founder, the eccentricities of its adherents and the exactions of its practice, all conspired to retard its reception. It then had no colleges to teach—no hospitals to verify—no journals to disseminate its discoveries. How changed is all this at the present day!

It had also to contend against the weight of authority, the prestige of great names, the power of prejudice, the influence of fashion, an immense commercial and corporation interest in the old order of things, and the pre-occupation of the whole ground by a powerful, learned and jealous profession. These are still its real and only enemies: not truth, or light, or reason, or science or nature. Independent and candid physicians came slowly to its rescue. The indolence of some, the timidity of others, and the self-interest of all, impelled them in the conservative direction. Still the heresy grew. When there were not physicians to urge it upon the people, there were people to demand it of the physicians. Its vitality was indestructible. Persecuted from one place, it sprang up in another. Extinguished

here, it ignited there. When one man rejected it, a dozen adopted it. Thus on, on it went, until it became what it is, which is only a prophesy of what it will be. Time has falsified the predictions of its enemies, but has not softened their bitterness. When they said it was declining, it was just wakening into life. When they declared it was dying, it was growing into power. And now that they swear it is dead, it is likely to prove immortal.

And yet, my good reader, *what is Homœopathy?* It has excited a great deal of public attention and private discussion. Every Allopathic professor ventilates the subject annually to his credulous class, and every Allopathic physician portrays its follies and its dangers to his restless patients. Nothing is so much talked about, and nothing so little understood. The "regular profession" universally sees it in a false light. It is indeed a curious subject. There is some truth in every thing which has been said against it, and some weakness in every argument which has been propounded for it. And still the Homœopathic law of cure—"*similia similibus curantur*"—is the vivifying principle of scientific medicine—the grand thought which is to revolutionize the medical world. It is worth studying. I have the ambition, and I think I have the power, to explain to you what Homœopathy is; what it really professes to be and to do; its essential nature and necessary limitations—without a particle of theorizing—in a plain, practical and convincing manner. What if it be not Hahnemannism, the Homœopathy of the past? Reflect candidly on my views and ask yourself as you read, Is not this the Homœopathy of nature, of reason, of common sense—the Homœopathy of the future?

DEPARTMENTS OF PRACTICE *NOT* HOMŒOPATHIC.

In the first place: Homœopathy is not a new and perfect Science of Medicine. It is no new gospel, no new revelation to the medical world. All such claims are preposterous. It is not Science, but a part of it. It is not Medicine, but a grand reform in one of its departments. It has no new Anatomy or Chemistry or Physiology or Pathology. It has no new Surgery or Obstetrics, although it has made great improvements in the medical treatment of surgical and obstetrical cases. It does not reject the accumulated experience of ages. It is not "the grave of scientific medicine," but its cradle. It holds fast to all that is good in the storehouses of the past. Every fact is of use to it.

Every truth is in sympathy with it. It repudiates nothing but error. The whole cycle of sciences, physical and psychological, is necessary to its full and final development.

Secondly: There are many measures (not medicines) valuable or indispensible in the treatment of disease. Such for instance as relate to the proper and scientific regulation of temperature, light, air, water, food, exercise, habits and the various influences which modify our mental and moral life. There, too, is the vast realm of Hydropathy—a therapeutic world in itself—the operation of hot and cold water, of ice, steam, vapor, local and general bathing, packing, etc., etc. Electricity; also, galvanism, magnetism, mesmerism, kinesipathy and chrono-thermalism, are no doubt exceedingly valuable in the treatment of many diseases. All these are not Homœopathy. They neither exclude it, nor are they excluded by it. They constitute a grand collateral department of the Healing Art—in the most friendly alliance with the homœopathic administration of drugs.

Thirdly: Homœopathy does not interfere with the use of *mechanical* measures, nor even with the use of drugs for certain *mechanical* purposes. Vomiting may expel a poison from the stomach, a gall-stone from the biliary ducts, or a false membrane from the windpipe. The Homœopathist may thus use emetics for their mechanical effect. Ergot to empty the uterus, belladonna to dilate the pupil, chloroform to relax the muscles, sulphur ointment to kill the itch-insect, vermifuges to destroy and expel worms, and in certain cases astringents, diluents, emollients and protectives (such as collodion), are examples of drugs being used to bring about certain mechanical ends, all admissable in the strictest homœopathic practice. Purgatives in some cases of great intestinal obstruction or torpor, become simple mechanical agents. Even blood-letting, as a mechanical measure, is perfectly allowable to the Homœopathic physician. He does not use it simply because the superiority of his medicine enables him to cure his patient without it. "Let your lancet rest," said a distinguished Homœopathist, "but do not throw it away."

Fourthly: There are chemical means of cure often available, and which act according to the laws of inorganic or organic chemistry, as the case may be. The antidotes for many poisons are used on this principle, and, of course, in the doses found requisite by laboratory experiment—a certain quantity of antidote being required to neutralize a certain quantity of poison. How often have we Homœopathists had to answer the silly question,

whether or not we treated arsenical poisoning by small doses of arsenic? Examples of chemical therapeutics are the following: Acids and alkalies for excess of alkalinity or acidity in the gastro-intestinal or urinary secretions; vegetable acids for scurvy; alkalies to dissolve inspissated mucus in some bronchial affections; certain remedies which modify the chemical condition of the blood; iron for an impoverished state of that fluid, phosphate of lime when deficient in the bones; chlorine, charcoal, lime, creosote and other antiseptics to arrest or prevent putridity, etc. This is not Homœopathy; neither is it Allopathy. It is vital chemistry, operating by special laws of its own, and equally free to the advocates of any system of medicine.

THE HOMŒOPATHIC PRINCIPLE OR LAW.

Having thus briefly surveyed those departments of practice in which Homœopathy, as such, does not profess to operate, we can approach more understandingly to the far greater and more important field in which it gives us the sole law of cure. The only point of dispute between Allopathists and Homœopathists is about the vital or dynamic action of drugs, and their application in the cure of disease. What is a medicine? Given to the healthy man, in sufficient dose, it is always a poison. The Greeks had but one word for medicine and poison. That drugs have any special healing, mollifying, curative effect is merely a popular superstition. Every drug is a poison, and it cures by means of its poisonous or disease-producing properties. Every dose of medicine occasions, beyond all dispute, an artificial disease. This artificial disease is the secret of the cure. Every dose of medicine given by an Allopathist to cure a sick man, would, if he were well, make him sick. Let this great truth, so ignored by the profession, so unknown to the public, be kept constantly in mind. The idea is very ancient. An old Sanscrit poem declares that poison is the remedy for poison. The homœopathic law peeps out even in Hippocrates, the father of medical literature. It is hinted at, or sometimes openly declared, in the saws and axioms of almost all the nations. Shakspeare, who caught up everything which was true and beautiful by a kind of divine instinct, thus teaches us Homœopathy:

> "In poison there is physic: and this news,
> Having been well, that would have made me sick,
> Being sick, has in some measure made me well."
>
> [Henry IV, Part 2, Act 1, Scene 1.

Never forget it. Drugs always produce artificial diseases. These artificial diseases are the mediums of the cure. Where shall they be produced and to what extent? These are the only vital questions. The Allopathist, in accordance with certain theories of disease and its cure, employs the poisonous properties of drugs to produce certain physiological perturbations, vomiting, purging, sweating, increased or diminished secretions, narcosis, depletion, stimulation, etc., etc., which he believes will effect his object. His general idea is to produce a state *opposite* to that already existing. The Homœopathist repudiates all this theory and practice, and affirms that diseases are cured by those drugs which produce similar diseases, in strong doses, on the healthy man. Both parties use poisons to cure. The situation, extent and character of the poisoning or artificial disease are the only mooted points. A slight, similar, morbid impression in the diseased spot, is the simple and beautiful law of Homœopathy. The Allopathist, having no such therapeutic law—nothing but his crude and often contradictory theories to guide him—produces very strong morbid impressions, sometimes, similar, and sometimes dissimilar; sometimes in the diseased point, sometimes in distant points; often in both. Sometimes one of his medicines produces one set of these symptoms, whilst another medicine produces the other. Sometimes a second medicine is required to undo what he had effected by the first. He pulls down, only to build up again. Now he blows hot, then cold; and so on. In fact, his philosophy is a labyrinth and his practice a chaos.

Hahnemann states our therapeutic law in the following terms: "A dynamic disease in the living economy of man is extinguished in a permanent manner by another, that is still more powerful, when the latter, (without being of the same species) bears a strong resemblance to it in its mode of manifesting itself." Leaving out the unnecessary and unestablished hypothesis, that the new disease is stronger than the old one, this formula is the most practical and beneficent generalization which has ever been made in the science of medicine. A dynamic natural disease (not a mechanical or chemical deviation from the normal standard) is best cured by producing a similar (not the same) dynamic disturbance in the same parts and tissues, which therefore manifests itself by similar symptoms. This is the only "indication" in Homœopathic practice. This is the clue which leads us out of all the old labyrinths of speculation and experiment, and makes available the disease-producing power of drugs.

Now this is the fundamental idea of Homœopathy, its true basis, its corner stone, its only essential element. All other questions—of large or small doses, of pellets or tinctures, of dynamizations, of what Hahnemann said, of what this or that disciple said or did, of imagination, or diet, or nature, or imposture, etc., etc.—all these questions and many other such, have no bearing on the point under trial, and are altogether collateral and impertinent. No matter what solution they receive, Homœopathy remains intact, vital, indestructable, and sure to be the medicine of the future, unless you overturn this grand pedestal, this natural or vital law, on which it has been erected. It is only the small fry of Allopathy, knowing little and thinking less, who attempt to ridicule this principle, "similia similibus curantur"—"Like cures like." The great leaders, the intelligent men of their school, although attacking our system just as bitterly on the unimportant side-issues, do not dare to impugn the truth of the fundamental law. They content themselves with attempting to limit its applications. Witness the following evidence from the very highest Allopathic authorities.

THE LAW PROVED BY ALLOPATHIC EVIDENCE.

"When Hahnemann promulgated this therapeutic formula, "*similia similibus curantur*," he supported his assertions by citations from the practice of the most illustrious physicians. There is every proof that local inflammations are frequently cured by the direct application of irritants, which cause a similar inflammation; the artificial irritation substituting itself for the primitive one."—Trousseau et Pidoux, Traite de Therapeutique, Tome 1, page 470.

"Supercession. By this process is meant the displacing or prevention of one affection by the establisment of another in the seat of it. It is a general, though by no means a universal, pathological law, that two powerful diseases or forms of abnormal action, cannot exist in the whole system or in any part of it at the same time. If, therefore, we can produce a new disease or new mode of abnormal action in the exact position of one that may be existing or expected, we may possibly supersede the latter; and if the new disorder subside spontaneously, without injury, we cure our patients. The operation of numerous remedial agents may be explained in this way."—Wood's Therapeutics, Vol. 1, page 54.

"Upon this ground we are disposed to suggest the use of strychnia in tetanus; not that we have become followers of Hahnemann, but that it is a simple and undeniable fact, that disorders are occasionally removed by remedies which have the power of producing similar affections. It is quite unnecessary to explain this fact by an arbitrary principle, that one artificial irritation excludes a spontaneous irritation of the same kind. A more rational

ground for an expectation of benefit from Homœopathic remedies may be found in the consideration, that such agents prove by their occasional production of symptoms like those of the disease to be treated, that they act on the part which is the seat of the disease, and consequently that there is a probability, that in their operation on that part (whether it be to the extent of producing a similar disease or not) they may effect a beneficial change. Oil of turpentine, for instance, having been known to produce a discharge of bloody urine, might be rationally administered in a case of spontaneous hematuria.—Dr. Symonds' Article on Tetanus, Cyclop. of Pract. Medicine, vol. 4, page 375.

For myself, I accept the above paragraphs as a very fair exposition of the principles upon which I practice what is called Homœopathy. Out of the mouths of the most intelligent and independant "regular" physicians, I can establish the truth and rationality of the Homœopathic law. I might multiply quotations by the dozen, but the above are sufficient. We differ, not as to the nature, but as to the extent of this great therapeutic principle immortalized by Hahnemann. Our Allopathic friends give it a subordinate place: we insist upon its supremacy. They acknowledge its partial influence; we maintain its universal applicability in the vital sphere. If they would abandon their unproved theories of disease, their perturbative measures of cure, their experimentation upon the sick, instead of upon the healthy, for their knowledge of drugs, and apply their own philosophy to practice, with a discreet diminution of all their doses, they would soon discover for themselves the universality of the Homœopathic law.

The great truths of Homœopathy are sometimes acknowledged by Old School thinkers in other shapes and under other hypotheses. Take for instance the following passage from a splendid work on Pharmacology, (vol. 1, page 32) by Prof. Geo. B. Wood, whose admirable lectures I attended twenty years ago in the University of Pennsylvania:

"The sensibilities are often different in health and in disease, so that the same medicine may produce opposite effects in these two states. Thus, cayenne pepper, which produces in the healthy fauces, redness and burning pain, acts as a sedative in the sore throats of scarlet fever. A concentrated solution of acetate of lead, applied to the denuded skin or to a mucous membrane, acts as an irritant; while the same solution, very much diluted, will operate as a sedative through the peculiar powers of the medicine."

Leaving out his theory of "different sensibilities," "opposite effects," "stimulant action," "sedative action"—all mere hypotheses, good examples of the vicious, theorizing propensities of

the Allopathic school—what are the naked facts which Dr. Wood here acknowledges? That acetate of lead produces a severe irritation of the healthy tissues, whilst a very much diluted preparation of the same substance cures a similar irritation; that cayenne pepper produces a burning sore throat in the healthy man, but cures the same kind of a sore throat in the sick one. Yes, Prof. Wood! push your own teachings here to their logical issue, and they will lead you into all the great truths and therapeutic blessings of Homœopathy. Arsenic concentrated will inflame the stomach; diluted, will cure a similar state. Colocynth concentrated will purge and gripe; diluted, will relieve the same symptoms. Cantharides concentrated will produce strangury; diluted, will cure it. Belladonna concentrated will congest the brain; diluted, will relieve a brain already congested; and so on, and so on, through the whole Materia Medica. What further proof do we need of the truth and rationality of the Homœopathic principle?

Indeed, who does not see that the opposite doctrine, "*contraria contrarus curantur*"—"opposites are cured by opposites"—has no foundation in reason or nature? It is a phrase or an idea accommodated to the shallowness of our untutored thought: just as we say, "the sun sets," when yet science teaches us that the sun never sets, but that his appearance and disappearance depend upon the revolutions of the earth. There are no "opposites" in any such sense as this ancient medical heresy suggests to the mind. Cold is not the opposite of heat, but its negation; darkness is not the opposite of light, but the effect of its withdrawal; ease is not the opposite of pain, but its absence; weakness is not the opposite of strength, but the want of it; a slow pulse is not the opposite of a rapid one, but its diminution. Inflammation, neuralgia, dropsy, vomiting, purging, etc., have no "opposites." Drugs produce no "opposites" to these morbid states, but only more or less inflammation, neuralgia, dropsy, vomiting, purging, etc. Allopathy is dissipated by analysis. Homœopathy, "*similia similibus*," more or less accurate, more or less scientific, more or less freed from collateral impediments, is the final issue of all medical progress.

PHASES OF THE HOMŒOPATHIC LAW.

There are three branches or classifications of the Homœopathic principle when applied to practice, each of which it is important to consider.

1st. When we produce a similar morbid impression in the diseased organ, we practice *direct, irritative* or *substitutive* Homœopathy. This includes nine-tenths of our daily use of drugs: it is pure Homœopathy.

2d. When we produce a similar morbid impression in a distant healthy part, in sympathetic relationship with the diseased part, so that the morbid impression is reflected or communicated by nervous transmission from one to the other, we are practicing *indirect, sympathetic* or *transpositive* Homœopathy.

3d. When we produce a morbid impression in healthy parts to prevent or exclude an approaching or threatened similar affection, we practice what may be called *preventive* or *anticipative* Homœopathy.

DIRECT HOMŒOPATHY.

The most obvious illustration of direct irritative, or substitutive Homœopathy is found in the common treatment of those local diseases which are within the reach of our hands and instruments. The use of caustic or irritant eye-washes to inflamed eyes, of nitrate of silver to sore throats or to the neck of the uterus, the introduction of medicated bougies, of stimulant injections, as in hydrocele, ascites, etc.; and the application of blisters, caustics, iodine, etc., to ulcers, erysipelas and other cutaneous affections, are examples in point. Whatever explanatory theory may sway the mind of the physician, the ultimate fact is, that a similar artificial disease has been induced in the diseased tissues. The Allopathist has perhaps not reflected on the essential point of *similarity.* But how can it be otherwise? Can he cure an inflammation by producing a neuralgia in the part; or a hemorrhage, by occasioning a dropsy; or a convulsion, by bringing on a cough? He will find that all of his local applications to diseased points are themselves irritant, and he will perfect his practice by making their use as homœopathic as possible.

By an easy and natural step we pass from this point to another, which is the most important and perhaps the most novel one in our whole exposition. Homœopathic medicine is but an an extension to the invisible interior of the body, of the theraputic principle which the Old School finds so efficient in the local treatment of disease. There is no reason why inflammation of the brain, liver, heart, lungs, bones, or any deep seated organ or tissue, should not be as readily modified and cured by direct irritants, as similar morbid states in the capillary system of the

eye, throat, the urethra, or the skin. If the Allopathists could have cauterized the brain, lungs, liver, etc., they would have done so long ago; and, reasoning from analogy, with every prospect of success. Now nature has provided us with a vast number of specific caustics or irritants to every organ and tissue in the body. By means of the well-recognized specific affinities of drugs for certain organs and tissues, we can produce artificial diseases in any given point of the body. What nitrate of silver is to the throat or eye, belladonna is to the brain, cantharides to the kidney, arsenic to the stomach, tartar emetic to the lungs, calomel to the liver, nux vomica to the spinal cord, etc., etc. That idea leads you into Homœopathy.

But how shall we compel nature to render up to us the secret of these glorious specifics? By long and painful experimentation upon the sick, the Old School has stumbled upon the homœopathic uses of a good many drugs. Mercury for syphilis, copavia for gonorrhea, sabina for uterine hemorrhage, calomel for inflammations of the mucous membranes, tartar emetic for pneumonia, rhubarb in diarrhea, ipecac for vomiting, nux vomica for asthma, quinine for intermittent, tonics for debility, alcohol for delirium tremens, and turpentine in urinary diseases, may be cited as illustrations of the fact. Almost all the so-called "alteratives" of Allopathy cure upon homœopathic principles. Individual physicians have here and there, now and then, used almost every drug on homœopathic principles; but the above specific applications have received a very general endorsement from the profession. When Allopathic physicians use those drugs in the above mentioned diseases, they are practicing a crude, bungling Homœopathy, with too large doses, however ignorant they may be of the fact.

Samuel Hahnemann enriched the science and reformed the practice of medicine, by discovering the true way to get at the specific operation of drugs. Whilst engaged in translating Cullen's Materia Medica from English into German, he was struck with the darkness which surrounded the action of Peruvian bark. The idea occurred to him, that the true way to solve the mystery and to ascertain the pure and unadulterated power of drugs, was to take them in large doses when in perfect health. With a wonderful spirit of honest research, and a noble self-sacrifice, he took Peruvian bark until it produced in him an attack of intermittent fever, for which it is specific. That, my good reader, was the cradle of Homœopathy. Hahnemann and his pupils and disciples

proceeded to construct a new Materia Medica, by experimenting upon themselves with full doses. This has been the pure homœopathic method of obtaining such knowledge ever since. This new, re-constructed, reformed Materia Medica is the true glory of Homœopathy. Of its priceless worth our Allopathic friends have no conception. It is to them a vast and shapeless chaos of material, which they had rather ridicule than study. It has indeed its faults, its errors, its fallacies, its fantasies, all of which may be eliminated by philosophic analysis, leaving a residuum of incalculable value. From this great Materia Medica nine-tenths of our practice is drawn. It is no child's play, no apprentice's labor, no first-class student's work, to study, to understand and to practice Homœopathy. Cultivated minds have sometimes shrunk away from the task, and affected an incredulity they were too intelligent to feel.

INDIRECT HOMŒOPATHY.

I shall now proceed to demonstrate that a very large remaining part of Allopathic practice, namely, that known as counter-irritation or revulsion, is also essentially homœopathic in its action. When a drug is given to a sick man, no matter what the physician proposes in his own mind to do, the upshot of his practice is, that he produces an artificial disease somewhere in the body. If it is a similar disease in the diseased point, he practices homœopathically and cures his patient. If it is a dissimilar disease in the same point, he practices allopathically or anti-pathically, and does not cure him. But suppose he cannot or does not reach or act upon the diseased point at all. He then produces an artificial disease in some distant and healthy point. What relation does this distant disease bear to the existing one? If it is an altogether different disease, it just inflicts so much additional suffering and injury on the patient. A cramp in the stomach cannot cure a cough; a hemorrhage from the kidneys cannot cure a neuralgia; a convulsion cannot cure a sore throat, and so on and so on. But a similar disease in a healthy point, may, by reflex action, sympathy or nervous transmission, cure a similar disease naturally existing in some other point. Let us illustrate this matter.

A blister to the skin frequently is advantageous in certain stages of pneumonia, inflammation of the brain, bowels, etc. The value of mustard plasters is known to everybody. How do they act? The common theory is that they detract nervous and vascular supply from the diseased internal point towards the sur-

face irritated—that there is a transfer of disease from the centre to the circumference. Now this supposed derivation is all sheer hypothesis. Pereira, a very high Allopathic authority, pronounces it to be "perfectly gratuitous and incapable of proof." The truth is precisely the opposite. They reflect their surface-irritation over to the inflamed organ, and cure it homœopathically. Dr. Wm. Stokes, one of the greatest Old School writers, acknowledges that "a part at least of the utility of blisters is owing to the direct stimulation conveyed to the capillaries of the diseased tissue. They are essentially stimulants." No other explanation than this is needed.

Let us watch nature and deduce our philosophy from her beautiful processes. Burns, which are accidental blisters, frequently produce internal inflammations. An extensive burn on the abdomen will cause inflammation and ulceration of the bowels—on the chest, it will inflame the lungs; on the head and face, the brain. So of all irritations; they are reflected from point to point in sympathetic relationship. The cold douche to the surface, contracting the cutaneous capillaries, repeats its impression, by nervous transmission on the visceral capillaries, and so arrests internal hemorrhages, etc. The organic state produced in one point, is reproduced or repeated in others. The irritated surface reflects its own state over to the point naturally diseased, and this reflected stimulation is equivalent to a direct cauterization, or to the action of a drug specific to the point. Purgatives, by irritating a vast tract of mucous membrane, will relieve, or at least palliate, upon this principle, a great number of internal diseases. This is indirect, sympathetic or transpositive Homœopathy. The homœopathic law is at the bottom of all such cures.

While thus teaching that there is but one philosophy of cure—that the key to Homœopathy is also the key to every thing that is good and useful in Allopathy—and that the homœopathic law underlies all rational medicine as its true foundation, and has never been understood in its whole length and breadth, and power, by either its enemies or its friends, I would not have my reader to suppose that it is immaterial whether one practices one system or the other. The superiority of Homœopathy to the old practice cannot well be estimated or described. The difference between them is like that between silver and gold. Our law of cure surrounds us with a new atmosphere of light, beauty and order. Our Materia Medica is rich in therapeutic resources. We have scores of wonderful specifics which accomplish for us what we

wish, without resorting to the coarse, cumbrous, complex and often injurious appliances of the Old School, even though the latter have the homœopathic law as the secret of their occasional success. There is one thing, however, we demand as our right If at any time our finer and purer homœopathic measures should fail, owing either to the infancy of our art, to the imperfection of our knowledge, or to the peculiar difficulties of our case, we are warranted in resorting, without being guilty of any inconsistency, to any other medicines or measures which we honestly believe to have a genuine homœopathic foundation for their remedial value. Our practice, then, can be misunderstood only by the very ignorant or the very uncharitable.

ANTICIPATIVE HOMŒOPATHY.

This class of homœopathic measures is rather small at present, but is probably capable of very great enlargement. Vaccination is an artificial disease, of which the essential element is a sore or pustule, precisely resembling that of small pox. The effect on the system mysteriously lasts a great while, and prevents or excludes the poison of small pox from affecting the protected individual. Belladonna produces many of the symptoms of scarlet fever; and it is regarded by many as a valuable preventive of that terrible disease—that is, keep the child under the influence of the belladonna poison, and it excludes for the time being the scarlet fever poison. To paint the sound skin around an inflammation with caustic, iodine, etc., to prevent its extension, is also an example of anticipative Homœopathy. But the best illustration is found in the use of Quinine for the cure of intermittent fevers. Dr. Wood, (Allopathic,) explains its action in this manner: Quinine produces certain morbid impressions in the same nervous centres through which the natural causes of intermittent operate. If the Quinine-poisoning is effected during the interval of the paroxysm, the malarial poison is excluded from operating on the nervous centres, and no paroxysm occurs. This production of a similar artificial disease before hand, to prevent or exclude one which is threatened, is anticipative Homœopathy. It may furnish the clue to the future discovery of many prophylactics.

A WORD ABOUT THE THEORY OF HOMŒOPATHY.

We naturally propose to ourselves an explanation of every thing we see. We love to understand causes. Alas! how seldom are we gratified. The greater, the grander the fact, the less do

we know of the causes of it. Life and all its phenomena is a world of mystery, of whose causes we know nothing. The apple falls to the ground, but we can discover no cause for gravitation. The needle trembles toward the pole, but we cannot tell why iron is magnetic. We can assign no adequate reason for any one of the thousand wonders of chemical affinity. So of the Homœopathic law. But the facts remain always the same, and we can use them as we please. "Like cures like," is as fixed a fact as any thing in physics. *Why* like should cure like may never be fully known. Still, our homœopathic philosophers have made many brave and ingenious attempts to solve the enigma. The literature of the school, French, German and English, swarms with theories and speculations on this inexhaustible theme. I wrote a book myself on the subject, a dozen years ago, and I have now a still more elaborate and recondite theory to broach, if I thought it would be worth the while. But there is no use of it. Homœopathy is entirely founded on FACT. The law, the Materia Medica, the dose, the application, the success, have no foundation but *facts*. The world has theorized long enough, especially the medical world. Homœopathy sets the true, practical example. It is a branch of the Positive Philosophy.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE DOSE.

Ah, yes! What about the dose? chuckles the unbeliever. Indeed the small dose, the apparent inadequacy of the means to effect the end in view, is the great stumbling-block in the way of the New School. And still, the dose, like the law itself, is not a matter to be settled by theory and speculation; but a mere matter of fact and experiment. The principle says nothing about dose. He who gives an ounce of epsom salts in a case of diarrhea, prescribes homœopathically just as truly as if he gave the same substance in the hundred millionth of a grain. Hahnemann and his disciples began by giving large doses, but produced such aggravations that they were obliged to diminish them greatly. They pushed the attenuating process, as most of us believe, to an unnecessary and even absurd degree. Still, it is a question only to be determined by experiment. I prefer to use our medicines in very small but still appreciable quantities—quantities which would have no influence whatever in health, or on any part of the system except upon the diseased point. The whole scale, however, from the crude natural substances up to the highest infinitesimals, should be open to the choice and the practice of every candid and sensible man.

Several general truths may be mentioned as tending to make the small dose of Homœopathy more credible or plausible to those who demand something more than the simple trial of it in disease.

All the great operations of nature, those of heat, light, chemical action, etc.; and those also of the human frame, particularly the wonderful modifications of the nervous fluid, are carried on by microscopic, atomic and infinitesimal movements, almost transcending our imagination.

Our medicines, vastly attenuated by trituration and succession, present an immeasurably greater surface for action, becoming thereby more electric or magnetic, or at any rate more subtle, penetrating and permeating; so that they effect a more perfect contact with the deepest recesses of the vital tissues, where the atomic, microscopic and infinitesimal operations of life are taking place.

Matter is indestructible, and no matter how far the subdivision be extended, every drop of the alcohol used as a vehicle must be pervaded with the infinitesimal atoms of the drug.

There are many natural agencies, malaria, effluvia, etc., which cannot be seen, felt, weighed or analyzed by man, which yet produce the most powerful morbid impressions on the system; so gradually and insensibly too, that man at the time is wholly unconscious of their action. It is not unreasonable to suppose that homœopathic drugs may act in a similar manner—nothing being felt by the patient beyond the gradual removal of the disease.

Homœopathic writers have illustrated this difficult point with great learning and ingenuity. Some of their more intelligent opponents know that their objections are really answered, and they are secretly put to the blush; but they cannot forego the malicious pleasure of keeping the "small dose" before the world as the essential part of Homœopathy. Believers in Homœopathy are, however, either persons of education and culture, or they are people of that strong, practical habit of thought which looks straight forward to the *result*—the *effect*—without troubling itself to understand the causes or the means.

LIMITATIONS OF THE HOMŒOPATHIC LAW.

There are several natural limitations to the operation of pure Homœopathy, which it is necessary to remember, before denouncing the practice of professed Homœopathists in certain cases.

1st. We only profess to be able to cure those morbid states

which we can imitate on the healthy body. We have discovered no drug which will produce any thing resembling a deposit of tubercles in the lungs, fatty deposits in the tissues of the heart, cancerous degeneration of the breast, etc. We shall no doubt add greatly to our remedial discoveries in the future; but at present there are many morbid conditions which we cannot produce by drugs, and for which, consequently we have no homœopathic specific.

2d. Some diseases are naturally incurable—not only the above but many others—such as ossification of the heart, softening of the brain, aneurism of the aorta, epilepsy, certain forms of paralysis and dropsy, etc., etc.

3d. Life itself is dependent upon certain conditions, the presence of certain natural elements and certain physiological stimuli acting on those elements. We must remove so far as possible the causes of disease. We must give food and air and water. Sleep also is a vital necessity. Sometimes it is a mere question of sleep or death. If we cannot remove by our specifics the morbid condition which prevents sleep, before the vital powers would become exhausted, we must administer opiates, or do any thing which will produce an artificial sleep. Sometimes, also, the excitability of the system has been so greatly exhausted by protracted or prostrating diseases, that a bottle of wine is worth all the medicine in the world.

Now, in such cases as these, with patients afflicted with strange and incurable diseases, or with those for which no homœopathic specific has ever been discovered, what is the Homœopathic physician to do? Is he to give them up into Allopathic hands, under the plea that he only practices medicine where he can make the homœopathic law available? Not if he is a man of scientific culture and independent character. He will do the best he can under the circumstances. He will palliate by every means in his power; and it is astonishing sometimes what relief homœopathic remedies can give even when they cannot cure. But, he need not confine himself to homœopathic remedies. His treatment should be empirical—any thing and every thing which promises to do his patient any good. If he falls short here of the most intelligent and wide-extended eclecticism, he is ignorant of his duty or faithless to his trust.

FINAL DEFINITION.

Homœopathy, therefore, is a *reform* in the central and main field of medical practice—a reform effected by the discovery of a

great therapeutic law, "*similia similibus curantur*," and by the construction of a new Materia Medica, which reveals to us the disease-producing properties of drugs.

A Homœopathic physician is one who uses the *surgical*, *obstetrical*, *mechanical* and *chemical* measures of the Old School; who, in the vital or dynamic sphere, is guided by the Homœopathic Law; and who, beyond its natural and necessary limitations, is an empiric and eclectic in the most liberal and enlightened sense of these words.

ALLOPATHIC OBJECTIONS NOTICED.

What have the "regular physicians" to say against this rational and beautiful philosophy and practice of medicine? How do they endeavor to blind themselves to its real merits and the public to its further reception? The fact is, that nine times out of ten they know little or nothing about it, and have neither the time nor the disposition to learn any thing more. They think that Prof. Andral and Prof. Simpson and Dr. Holmes, etc., have examined the question fairly, decided point blank against it, and that it should now be laid on the shelf. Moreover, they are getting along very comfortably as they are. Why should they fluster themselves and their little circles, lose some of their practice, alienate their brother-doctors and commit themselves to a new doctrine, which certainly has had its fair share of trials, persecutions and misrepresentations to encounter? Innovaters need not count on "the powers that be" to assist them in their labors. Some acute writer has remarked, that if it were not for the restless spirit of inquiry and progress existing in the laity, there never would have been a single permanent reform in law, government, theology or medicine.

Still they must have some answer to give this inquiring public, when it presses them closely on the homœopathic question. In their published expositions, they generally attack the visionary theories of Hahnemann with great fury. If Hahnemannism were Homœopathy, the system would have long ago been demolished. But Hahnemannism is a man of straw. Homœopathy is a different thing altogether, and demands a very different kind of answer —not yet given. To the public our opponents make many objections. The "small dose" comes in for the main share of ridicule and incredulity. The story of little Johnny Smith, who swallowed all the sugar pellets in his mother's box, without being hurt, is, of course, never omitted. Then, it's all "imagination," although

babies and horses are cured by it as well or better than the most imaginative young or old ladies. Then, it's all "diet," although it is well known that we always allow a more liberal diet than the Old School physicians. Then it's all "nature," but the wonder is that Nature should always practice in partnership with us and not with them. But all these things are shallow and silly—quite beneath the dignity of the present argument. Our answer to all this is the following.

WHAT HOMŒOPATHY HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

It has spread over the civilized world and has been especially favored by the most influential and intelligent classes of society. It has schools, hospitals, journals, dispensaries, associations of all kinds; and it numbers its practitioners by thousands, and its patients by millions.

It has given a new and vast impetus to the study of the true action of drugs by experimentation with them on the healthy system.

It has thus re-organized, we might almost say, created a Materia Medica, a glorious monument of learning, industry and self-sacrifice.

It has rendered Pathology the highest service by making that great branch of medical science truly practical; for an exact parallel, functional and organic, between the phenomena of diseases and drugs, is necessary to the scientific selection of homœopathic medicines.

By its great therapeutic law it has introduced new light, order, beauty and efficiency into the theory and practice of medicine.

It has cured thousands of cases of chronic disease beyond the reach of Allopathic art, and has treated all the acute diseases with admirable success.

It has met all the great epidemics, and proved itself always superior to the Old System. I was converted from the Old to the New School by witnessing the triumphs of Homœopathy in the treatment of the Asiatic Cholera in the terrible epidemics of 1849–50–51. In Yellow Fever its success was equally surprising. Dr. Davis and myself treated over a thousand cases at Natchez in 1853–5, with a mortality of less than 7 per cent. On account of this great triumph, we were elected Physicians and Surgeons of the Mississippi State Hospital, (an old and well endowed Allopathic institution,) and our reports from that institution were further confirmatory of the superiority of the New System.

It has saved thousands of cases from surgical operations, and has introduced new comfort and safety into the lying-in room of woman.

It has been a blessing to children and to mothers incalculable.

It has been found as useful in the diseases of animals as of men, and many veterinary institutions have been established for its practice.

Finally, it has shortened the average duration of disease, diminished the expense of treatment, economized the vital resources of the patient, and delivered its friends from the frequently baneful and long-lasting effects of enormous doses of medicine.

ELEMENTS OF RECONCILIATION.

With all these inherent advantages and elements of success, who believes that Homœopathy can ever be destroyed by any thing its enemies may say or do? On the other hand, what a pity it is, that with so much neutral ground to stand upon, and so much real harmony beneath the outward show of total dissimilarity: what a pity it is, that there should be two great rival schools of medicine, jarring and jangling, and foolishly abusing each other! It is the fault of both. Hahnemann was a great and high spirited "regular physician," and he published his first homœopathic teachings in the best medical journal in Europe. He was met by that storm of opposition, ridicule, and contempt with which mediocre conservatism always assails the Columbuses, the Luthers, the Harveys, the Jenners, the Fultons of our race. He became exasperated and dogmatic, and henceforth aspired to found a New School, as different from the other as possible. No great reformer ever imposed the despotism of the master so thoroughly on his disciples. This generation, however, is getting rid of it; Hahnemann is falling back to a subordinate place; and Homœopathy reformed, emancipated, and rationalized, is established on a stronger and more scientific basis than ever.

Whilst the Homœopathists are no longer Hahnemannians, the Old School is approaching to Homœopathy with rapid strides. They have decreased their doses in the most exemplary manner. They have acquired more knowledge of the natural history of disease, and more respect for a purely expectant medicine. Their acknowledgment of the homœopathic law is extending, and volumes of good Homœopathy might be picked out of their published practice. They have even formed societies to ascertain the true effect of drugs by experimenting on themselves, in imitation

of Hahnemann and his disciples. Their great leaders are questioning all the old settled principles and practice of Allopathy. The lancet is almost wholly abandoned by them. They denounce the abuses of quinine and opium and calomel and purgatives almost as energetically as we do. The spirit of innovation is doing a good work. Faith in their own principles and practice is declining everywhere. Dr. Holmes, the great humorist and opponent of Homœopathy, (himself an Allopathic professor,) declares that if all the medicines in the world, except wine and opium, were thrown into the sea, it would be better for men and only worse for the fishes.

The closer our approximation to the truth on any subject, the more thoroughly we shall agree in opinion. There are no skeptics or heretics in mathematics or astronomy. It follows, that all the discrepancies of opinion which men entertain, arise from ignorance of natural laws, from merely partial glimpses of them, or from misconceptions of their true meaning and extent. The present chaos of the mental and moral world is to be remedied, like the old terrestrial chaos, by the creation and influx of light. Knowledge is the true and only healer of dissensions. The powerful ferment of thought which characterizes the present century, will eventuate in a better order of things, and the establishment of the true fundamental principles of theology, government, science and art. For medicine, too, and medical men, there is a coming millenium and the reign of brotherly love.

SUGGESTIVE EXTRACTS FROM RENOURD'S HISTORY OF MEDICINE, TRANSLATED BY PROF. COMEGYS.—PAGE 654.

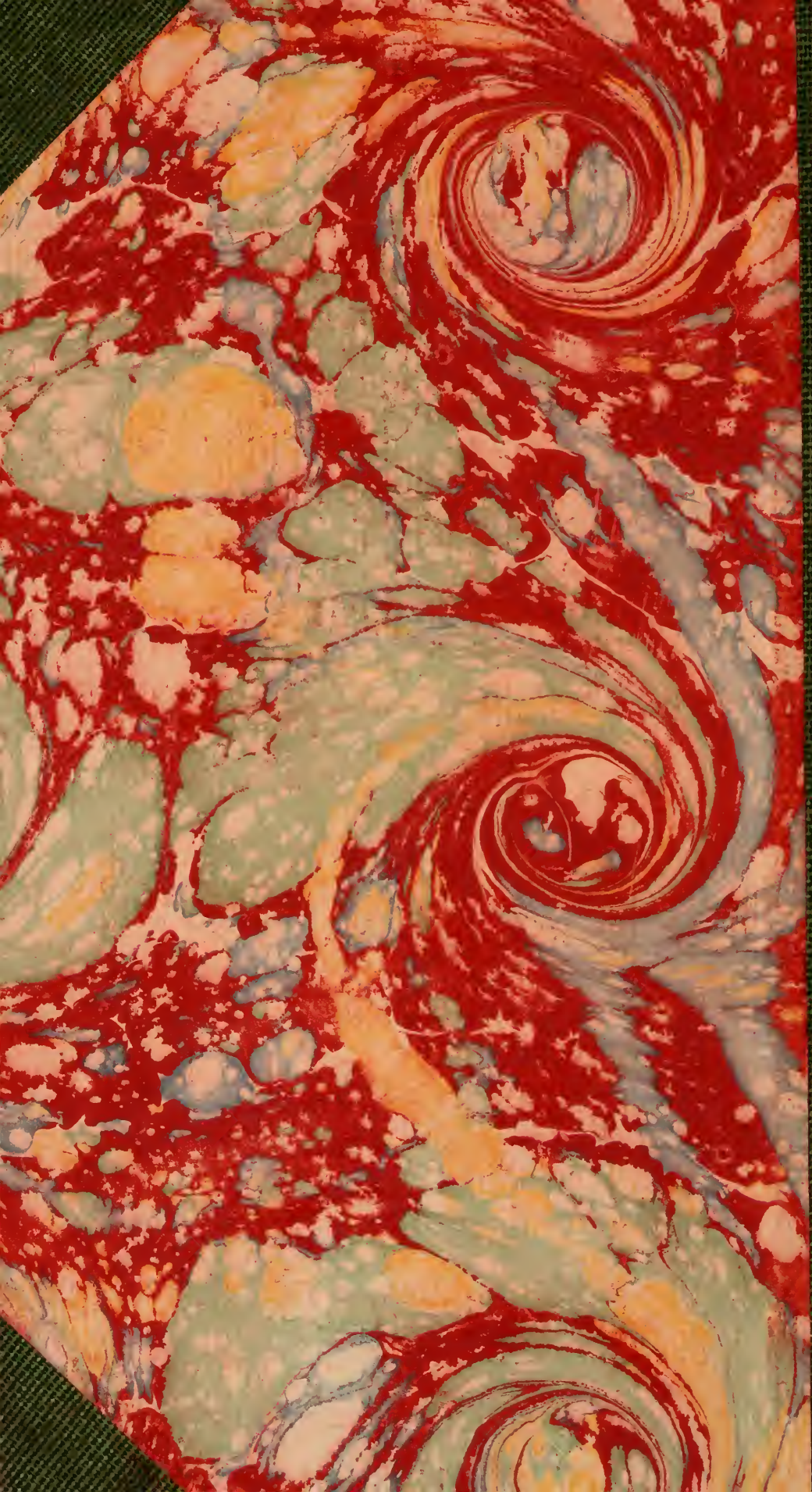
"'The time has gone by,' truly remarks the translator of Hahnemann, 'when the pleasantries relative to the infinitesimal doses can be regarded as good arguments against Homœopathy.' We are certainly compelled to take this doctrine into serious consideration, since men, commendable by their scientific titles and medical position, members of faculties, hospital physicians, and eminent practitioners have embraced it, and become its public defenders; since journals have been established and societies instituted in different countries to make public its principles and practice."

"It is true that a long time ago, some experiments were made; but these experiments, now almost forgotten, should have been resumed on a grander scale by different therapeutists: for it must be avowed that the negative results published by M. Andral, or any other experimenter, whoever he may have been, cannot nullify the positive results which the Homœopathists pretend to oppose to them."

"What can we answer when they say to us:

'The most efficacious means possessed by the Healing Art, viz: *Specifics*, which, according to common consent, procure the mildest, promptest and most durable cures, your official medicine proscribes as much as possible; it excludes them from its theory if not from its practice. We, on the contrary, come to teach you a means to discover and a method to employ these admirable instruments of cure.'

"What have we to respond to such an argumentation as this? Nothing, absolutely nothing serious and logical."

P478

COUNTWAY LIBRARY OF MEDICINE
RX
81
H81 H69
1866
RARE BOOKS DEPARTMENT